

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 00184 160007Z

17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 /086 W

----- 118236

R 152230Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8538

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ECON, CA

SUBJ: TRUDEAU ECONOMIC COMMENTARY CAUSES CONTINUED
REACTION

REF: OTTAWA 0060

1. SUMMARY: MEDIA ATTENTION TO TRUDEAU REMARKS ON CANADA'S
ECONOMIC FUTURE CONTINUES WITHOUT LETUP.
MAJORITY REMAINS CRITICAL. MOST REASONABLE COMMENTARY NOTES
NEED FOR CLARIFICATION AND TRUDEAU WILL ATTEMPT THIS IN
JAN 19 ADDRESS. EMBASSY BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT PERCEPTION
LIKELY MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN REALITY AND THAT MOST COMMENTATORS
MORE INTERESTED IN ATTACKING TRUDEAU THAN IN TAKING
TIME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE TRYING TO SAY. END SUMMARY.

2. TRUDEAU VIEWS ON CANADIAN ECONOMIC FUTURE (REFTEL)
CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REMARKABLE DEGREE OF MEDIA ATTENTION.
TRADITIONAL SLOW NEWS SEASON AROUND CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS
MAY HAVE ACCOUNTED, IN PART, FOR EARLIER OUTBURST OF
PRESS ATTENTION. BUT MATTER IS GETTING AT LEAST
EQUAL ATTENTION NOW. NEARLY EVERY COMMENTATOR OF ANY
STANDING HAS HAD HIS SAY AND SOME HAVE RETURNED FOR
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 00184 160007Z

SECOND TRY.

3. COMMENTARY APPEARS TO BE LARGELY BASED ON PRECONCEPTION. AS BEFORE, MAJORITY TAKE BASICALLY HOSTILE VIEW TO TRUDEAU REMARKS AND/OR TRUDEAU LEADERSHIP. CRITICAL COMMENT GENERALLY FAULT TRUDEAU FOR SUGGESTING, EVEN PLANNING DEATH OF FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AND OF UNDERTAKING THIS MAJOR DEPARTURE FROM EARLIER STATED POLICIES WITHOUT BENEFIT OF NEW ELECTROAL TEST. SYMPATHETIC COMMENTARY, WHICH IS SPARSE, NOTES THAT TRUDEAU HAS SAID ALL OF THIS BEFORE MANY TIMES AND THAT HIS SUGGESTIONS OF POSSIBLE GREATER GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE ECONOMY IS REALISTIC AND SENSIBLE. THEY ADD THAT, IN ANY CASE, THIS DOES NOT REPRESENT DEATH SENTENCE FOR THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM OF PAST SEVERAL DECADES.

4. MORE MODERATE COMMENTATORS IN BOTH CAMPS EMPHASIZE PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT POINT, I.E., TRUDEAU REMARKS CAN BE INTERPRETED IN VARIOUS WAYS AND SOME CLARIFICATION CLEARLY IN ORDER. LAST POINT NOT LOST ON GOVERNMENT WHICH OBVIOUSLY STARTLED BY INTENSITY AND QUANTITY OF CRITICISM ELICITED BY TRUDEAU REMARKS. FYI: MICHAEL KIRBY, PM ADVISOR AND ASSISTANT, VOICED SUCH ASTONISHMENT TO POL COUNS. END FYI. TRUDEAU, THEREFORE, PLANS CLARIFICATION IN ADDRESS TO CANADIAN MEN'S CLUB IN OTTAWA EVENING JANUARY 19.

5. COMMENT: CERTAINLY, MORE CRITICAL COMMENT APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN LIBERTIES WITH WHAT TRUDEAU SAID AND APPARENTLY MEANT. HIS EFFORT TO EXPLAIN, THEREFORE, MAY TEND TO ABATE THIS UPROAR. BUT PERCEPTION AND REACTION PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT, IN ANY CASE, THAN ACTUAL CONTENT AND PURPORT OF TRUDEAU VIEWS. IT SEEMS CLEAR TO EMBASSY THAT MANY COMMENTATORS NOT PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN CLOSE READING AND INTERPRETATION OF REMARKS IN THEIR HASTE TO GET AT TRUDEAU AND HIS LEADERSHIP. PERHAPS MOST INSTRUCTIVE ASPECT OF ENTIRE EPISODE IS ITS INDICATION THAT THE TRUDEAUMANIA OF PM'S EARLY YEARS IN OFFICE HAS SUFFERED SUBSTANTIAL ATTRITION. IF IT HAS NOT BEEN REPLACED BY TRUDEAUPHOBIA, IT IS AT LEAST EVIDENT THAT THERE IS BROADER DISTRUST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 OTTAWA 00184 160007Z

OF TRUDEAU AS "PHILOSOPHER KING", AND THAT MANY WHO IN THE PAST WOULD HAVE AUTOMATICALLY SUPPORTED, DEFENDED OR GIVEN HIM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT, ARE NO LONGER WILLING TO DO SO. JOHNSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, SPEECHES, ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976OTTAWA00184
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760016-0623
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760154/aaaabvrs.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 OTTAWA 60
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <23 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRUDEAU ECONOMIC COMMENTARY CAUSES CONTINUED REACTION
TAGS: PINT, ECON, CA, (TRUDEAU, PIERRE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006